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THE CONSPIRACY OF ORGETORIX— A DRAMATIZATION

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One of the most successful means of arousing interest this year has been the dramatization of the story of Orgetorix in Book I of the *Gallic Wars*. A class which had found much pleasure in first-year Latin seemed to be entirely lacking in enthusiasm for their second-year work. They read Book II of the *Gallic Wars* with but little interest, even though frequent comparisons were made with the great world-war of today. It seemed necessary to do something to arouse them from this state of indifference. Dramatization therefore was tried, and the results were exceedingly gratifying.

The first readings were given as the chapters were translated. Then a regular cast was chosen, and the whole play (four scenes) was presented before another section, which had just completed the same work in Caesar. The performance was such a success that it was repeated before the entire school. No costumes were attempted except swords, shields, and spears for the soldiers. These, however, appealed greatly to the audience.

Since the dramatization the reading of Caesar has been an entirely different thing for the particular class which gave the play. Caesar's *Commentaries* have a real meaning for them now, and they no longer translate mere words. Other classes also were benefited and an increase of interest and enthusiasm for Latin has been felt throughout the school.

INTRODUCTORY SYNOPSIS

(Read before audience, part of whom had not studied Latin.)

Caesar tells us that a short time before his arrival in Gaul the Helvetians who lived in the land which is now Switzerland had become discontented with their narrow limits. An ambitious young noble, Orgetorix by name,

conceived the idea of emigrating to other territory and formed a plot to overthrow the regular government in order to carry out his idea. News of his scheme, however, reached the ears of the rulers of the state, and he was summoned to appear for a trial. By means of a trick, the bringing of a huge mob of his friends and followers to court with him, he prevented the regular legal procedure and escaped from pleading his case. He probably realized, however, that his cause was a hopeless one, as he was shortly afterward found dead, and the general opinion seemed to be that he had committed suicide.

(Read before various scenes.)

1. In our play the first scene represents Orgetorix persuading three other Helvetians to enter into his conspiracy. He describes the way in which they are hemmed in on all sides and urges them to emigrate.

2. In the second scene the three Helvetians discuss their preparations for the departure. They decide to buy up animals and carts, to sow as much grain as possible, and to emigrate on the third year.

3. In the third scene Orgetorix persuades Casticus and Dumnorix, nobles of neighboring states, to join his conspiracy. These three young nobles hope to gain control of all of Gaul.

4. The fourth scene represents the trial of Orgetorix and his escape through the aid of a great crowd of clients, debtors, and friends.

The subsequent announcement of his sudden death brings an end to the conspiracy.

CONIURATIO ORGETORIGIS

SCENA PRIMA

(Enter *Orgetorix* and three *Helvetians*.)

Orgetorix: Orgetorix sum, nobilissimus et ditissimus Helvetiorum.

Helvetius (1): Helvetii sumus, nobilitas Helvetiorum.

Orgetorix: Audite, O Helvetii, O nobiles Helvetii! Pro multitudine hominum et pro gloria belli atque fortitudinis angustos finis habemus.

Helvetius (2): Verum est, angustos finis habemus.

Orgetorix: Undique loci natura Helvetii continentur, una ex parte flumine Rheno, latissimo atque altissimo; altera ex parte monte Iura, altissimo, qui est inter Sequanos et Helvetios; tertia, lacu Lemanno et flumine Rhodano, qui provinciam Romanam ab Helvetiis dividit. Undique, undique Helvetii continentur.

Helvetius (3): Verum est, undique continemur. Ita continemur ut minus late vagemur et minus facile finitimus bellum inferre possimus.

Orgetorix: Qua ex parte, O Helvetii, ego, vir bellandi cupidus, magno dolore adipior. Ego cupio ut de finibus nostris exeamus.

Helvetius (2): Bene dixisti, Orgetorix. De finibus nostris exeamus.

Helvetius (1 and 3): Exeamus! Exeamus!

Orgetorix: Virtute, O nobiles, nos omnibus praestamus. Igitur perfacile est totius Galliae imperio potiri.

Helvetius: Bene! bene! Orgetorix dixit bene. Imperio totius Galliae potiemur. De finibus nostris exeamus.

Omnes: Exeamus!

(*Exeunt omnes.*)

SCAENA SECUNDA

(*Enter the three Helvetians.*)

Helvetius (2): Orgetorix bene dixit. Vir fortissimus est.

Helvetius (3): Orgetorix quoque sapientissimus est; verum est, angustos finis habemus.

Helvetius (1): Potentissimus est Orgetorix. Auctoritas eius est maxima.

Helvetius (3): Orgetorix dixit oportere ea quae ad proficiscendum pertinerent comparare.

Helvetius (2): Ego iumentorum et carorum quam maximum numerum coemus.

Helvetius (1): Ego quoque.

Helvetius (2): Sementis quam maximas servi mei faciunt.

Helvetius (1 and 3): Nostri servi quoque.

Helvetius (1): Quo tempore proficiscemur?

Helvetius (3): Ad eas res conficiendas biennum satis est.

Helvetius (1): Bene dixisti. Biennum satis est. In tertium annum profectionem lege confirmemus.

Helvetius (2): Ubi est Orgetorix?

Helvetius (1): Necesse est cum proximis civitatibus pacem et amicitiam confirmare. Orgetorix sibi legationem ad civitates suscepit.

Helvetius (2): Bene factum est. Nos quoque laboremus ut omnia quae ad proficiscendum pertineant comparemus.

Helvetius (2): Bene dixisti. Laboremus!

Omnes: Laboremus! Laboremus!

(*Exeunt omnes.*)

SCAENA TERTIA

(*Enter Casticus.*)

Casticus: Casticus sum, Catamantaloedis filius, Sequanus.

(*Enter Orgetorix.*)

Orgetorix: Salve! O Castice!

Casticus: Salve Orgetorix, nobilissimus Helvetiorum.

Orgetorix: Tu quoque nobilis es, O Castice, pater tuus regnum in Sequanos multos annos obtinuit; pater tuus a senatu populi Romani amicus appellatus est.

Casticus: Omnia haec scio, Orgetorix.

Orgetorix: Cur tu in civitate tua regnum non occupavisti?

Casticus: Regnum in mea civitate occupare difficile est, Orgetorix.

Orgetorix: Non difficile est—est perfacile factu. Ego meae civitatis imperium obtenturus sum. Ego meis copiis meoque exercitu tibi regnum in tua civitate conciliabo.

(*Enter Dumnorix.*)

Dumnorix: Salve! O Castice!

Casticus: Salve! O Dumnorix!

Orgetorix: Quis advenit?

Casticus: Est Dumnorix, Haeduus, frater Divicaci.

Orgetorix: Salve! O Dumnorix!

Dumnorix: Salve Orgetorix!

Orgetorix: Nonne tu in civitate tua principatum obtines, O Dumnorix?

Dumnorix: Verum est principatum obtineo sed non regnum.

Orgetorix: Cur non regnum occupavisti?

Dumnorix: Regnum in mea civitate occupare difficile est. Frater meus, Diviciacus potentissimus est.

Orgetorix: Non difficile est. Tu maxime plebi acceptus es. Ego et Casticus regna in civitatibus nostris occupabimus et nos regnum tibi conciliabimus. Praeterea, Dumnorix, filiam habeo—filiam pulcherrimam. Si te nobiscum coniunges, tibi filiam meam in matrimonium dabo. Adveni, filia mea.

(*Enter Filia.*)

Dumnorix: Pulcherrima est. Visne mecum ire, O puella?

Filia: Quod pater vult, ego volo.

Dumnorix: Bene est. Filiam tuam in matrimonium ducam et me vobiscum coniungam.

Orgetorix: Bene! Bene! Fidem et ius iurandum inter nos demus.

Omnes: Ius iurandum demus.

(*Exeunt omnes.*)

SCENA QUARTA

(*Enter Magistratus, with two soldiers and a messenger. Magistratus stands in front of his chair of office, the soldiers stand in position, one on each side of the chair, and the messenger at a little distance.*)

Magistratus: Magistratus Helvetiorum sum. Hi sunt milites. Ille est nuntius.

(*Magistratus seats himself. Enter Index, makes obeisance.*)

Index: Salve, O magistratus! Aliquid tibi dicere volo.

Magistratus: Quid est?

Index: Orgetorix, nobilissimus et ditissimus Helvetiorum coniurationem fecit.

Magistratus: Orgetorix coniurationem fecit?

Index: Verum est, Orgetorix coniurationem fecit.

(*Exit Index.*)

Magistratus: Propera, O nuntie, et Orgetorigem ad iudicium venire iube.

(*Exit Nuntius.*)

Magistratus: Moribus nostris Orgetorigem ex vinculis causam dicere cogemus. Si Orgetorix damnatus erit oportebit ut igni cremetur.

(*Enter Nuntius.*)

Nuntius: Orgetorix venit.

(*Enter Orgetorix, with his mob of clients, debtors, friends, etc. The crowd shouts: "Orgetorix bonus est. Non coniurationem fecit. Non malus est. Bonus est Orgetorix," etc. Orgetorix slips out.*)

Magistratus: Discedite, discedite omnes.

(*The crowd departs still shouting.*)

Magistratus: Non possumus iudicium habere. Orgetorix ne causam diceret se eripuit. Nunc, O milites, exite et multitudinem hominum ex agris convocate. Ius civitatis armis exsequendum est.

(*Exeunt milites. Enter Index excitedly.*)

Index: Salve, O magistratus! Aliquid tibi dicere volo. Orgetorix mortuus est.

Magistratus: Estne verum?

Index: Verum est. Orgetorix mortuus est, et Helvetii arbitrantur eum sibi mortem consivisse.

(*Exit Index.*)

Magistratus: O miserum Orgetorigem. . . . Finis est coniurationis.